

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Air and Radiation
Office of Transportation and Air Quality**

**“Clean Air Transportation Communities” RFP Conference Call
Q&A from March 7, 2001**

(Questions that repeat those in the March 6, 2001, conference call are not indicated here. Some questions could not be answered in full during the conference call were followed up upon, and the answers are given here.)

A. What is the time frame for the competition?

Projects will have a two year project period and a two year budget period (the two run together across the same calendar interval), dating from the time of the awarding of funds. The date of award is anticipated to be by early June.

The budget estimate submitted with the application should include cost estimates that indicate what will be accomplished in the first and second years of the budget period. (Note: in unusual circumstances, the recipient may petition for a 60-day extension to expend funds, but must do so in advance of the end of the budget period.)

B. Is it possible to submit an application for funding under this RFP, if currently under consideration or waiting for EPA approval or certification of an technology or process under another program (in this case a new technology associated with diesel filters)?

Yes, an applicant can submit a proposal to multiple funding authorities, but EPA must be notified (contact Mary Walsh at walsh.mary@epa.gov) if an award is made to the same project that is submitted for this competition. EPA will not fund a proposal that has already been funded by another source, but will consider funding a if the part for which EPA funding is sought is separate (and comprises a discrete task) from the part that is funded elsewhere .

C. What type of alternative vehicle would be considered new or innovative to be considered for this RFP?

It must be innovative, not currently in existence, or has some element about the context in which it is being used that adds a new dimension not previously demonstrated. Remember, projects must be demonstrations or pilots of projects not previously undertaken in the United States. Applicants are encouraged to visit the ICLEI website (www.greenfleets.org) and EPA’s websites (www.epa.gov and associated websites, like www.epa.gov/otaq) become informed on what has been done in this field. The burden is upon the applicant to do that background work to assure that the proposal is truly innovative. Our review team will also apply its expertise to screen out projects that appear repetitious of previously-demonstrated ideas.

D. How do applicants obtain the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number

(a valid CFDA number is required for all EPA grants awarded after May 26, 1997)?

The CFDA number to use in the form under section 10 of SF-424 is 66.606 (“Surveys, Studies, Investigations and Special Purpose Grants”).

E. Can funding under this Request for Proposals be used for capital and operating costs of the proposed project?

Yes, but capital costs related to construction of a building are not allowable. See question G. from the Q&A summary from the 3/6/01 call for more details; including information on accessing EPA’s grants web page. As always, recipients are required to follow all regulations regarding service contracts, and subgrants.

Follow-up note: For more information, you may search the OMB website for the cost principles and other circulars at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a133_compliance/ed.html (don’t be put off by the “Department of Education” legend; if you’re particularly interested in rules on subgrants, scroll down to “B. Allowable Costs/Cost Principles”).

F. Can the emissions reductions to be achieved in a proposed project for the RFP be obtained in 20-30 years? Will this affect the possibility of being selected?

Yes, but OTAQ is also interested seeing what up-front benefits or emissions reductions are expected by the end of the period of the assistance agreement-- in the next two years. If it is possible to have a long range projection and a projection of the benefits in the next two years, that will provide additional information on the relative cost effectiveness and sustainability of the project that can assist the reviewers. However, no proposal will be disqualified for not having short term as opposed to a longer term benefit.

G. Would the use of commuter choice options to alleviate congestion from new highway construction be innovative?

The use of a Commuter Choice program, by itself, is not innovative. The innovation would have to be in the application of Commuter Choice program. What is new about the context in which it is being used, aside from being in a new locality? Is there an opportunity to combine the program with another emissions-reduction strategy that hasn’t been done before.

H. Would the expansion of retrofitting a waste truck fleet to bio-diesel or compressed natural gas (CNG) be innovative?

Replacing fleet vehicles that run on “conventional” fuels with alternative fuel vehicles (using established technology), by itself, is not innovative. Retrofitting programs are also underway in the United States, so this, too, would not meet the innovation criterion. See the answer to the previous question about the idea of adding a new dimension to an established program.

I. What are the rules regarding the availability of project funding?

CORRECTION: In the call, it was indicated that funding is available for a project for two fiscal years, but that, due to the timing that comes to less than two full calendar years. We have subsequently found that we extend the budget period and the project period to two calendar years, dating from the time of the award.

J. What is the total amount of funds that will be awarded?

Approximately 750K is available nationwide; individual awards are anticipated to range from \$50,000 to \$300,000. The number of proposals to be awarded has not been predetermined, and depends on the number, type, and budget of proposals that come in and are selected for award.

K. How many multi-state organizations intend to apply?

That information is not available. FYI, while multi-state and tribal organizations are encouraged to apply, there is no set aside or earmark for those groups

L. Can the American Lung Association be partners?

Yes, but they can not submit an application. Proposals will only be accepted from state, local, regional, multi-state or tribal agencies.

M. Is it possible to use an eligible organization as a pass-through (in this case a State Department of Natural Resources)?

Yes, as long as the applicant and responsible agency is an eligible organization. All applicants are encouraged to be involved in the proposed projects, and not simply serve as the pass-through for funding.

N. Is it possible to combine the funds from the EPA assistance agreement with other federal program funds such as Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Implementation Program funds? Is it necessary to segregate EPA funds and describe the specific portion of the proposed project to be funded using EPA funds?

Yes, it is possible to use EPA funds under this RFP to leverage other programs. However, the budget in the proposal must indicate what discrete part of the project EPA will fund with its money. EPA's grants office is not interested in seeing the whole budget, if it involves funds from other sources. However, for the purpose of establishing the level of support promised by partners, applicants can indicate the level of resources expected from their partners.

CORRECTION: At the conference call, it was indicated that it might be possible for EPA to fund a portion of an overall proposal that, by itself, will not be the source of emissions benefits, but contributes to the overall proposal that will. After consulting on this question with EPA's grants office, it has been made clear that the portion funded by EPA must itself be responsible for the measurable emissions benefits required for eligibility under this competition.

O. What is needed in the pre-application process/letter of intent?

A simple letter of intent with very basic information is requested but not required. Please submit the name of the applying organization, a contact person, e-mail, phone, street address, plus a working title or one-to-two sentence encapsulation of the project idea. The letter of intent commits the sender to nothing, nor is it judged in any way. The submission or non-submission of a letter of intent will not affect the evaluation of any project that may be submitted. However, EPA still requests the courtesy of the letter of intent, anytime before the deadline for proposals.

P. Are demonstrations of support from the partners required?

Letters of support expressing the commitment of partners will strengthen an application and are required as part of the application package. (The other two elements are the application forms for federal assistance, SF-424 and SF-424a, fully completed, and the narrative, which must address the elements described in the Request for Proposals.)

Q. Can the Letter of Intent come directly from the city rather than the potential applicant agency of the city?

Yes, but it is preferred that the application come from the actual unit of eligible government agency that will be submitted.

R. What will the inclusion of a minority-owned business or organization in the application do?

There is no set-aside or earmark for minority-owned businesses or organizations.

S. How many assistance agreements will be awarded?

There is no set number. Only the total amount of award funding available (\$750,000) and the cap on individual awards (\$300,000) is set for this competition.